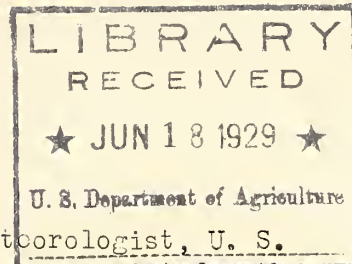


Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

137Ra

MAY WEATHER AND CROP GROWTH



A radio talk by Mr. J. B. Kincer, agricultural meteorologist, U. S. Weather Bureau, through Station WRC and 16 other stations associated with the National Broadcasting Company, at 1:38 p. m., Eastern Standard Time, Wednesday, June 5, 1929.

In most of the interior of the country, May, in general, because of persistent coolness and wetness, was unfavorable for agricultural interests, especially for planting spring crops, germination of seed, and cultivation of early-seeded fields. The previous April also weather had been too wet for field work. At the beginning of May some corn had been planted locally as far north as the Ohio Valley and southern Missouri, but, in general, very little had been seeded, except in parts of the Southwest. In an average year corn planting begins by May 1, as far north as southeastern Pennsylvania, the north-central portions of the Ohio Valley States, southern Iowa, and south-central Nebraska, and thus seeding at that time this year was considerably behind. In the Spring Wheat Belt conditions were better, and seeding wheat was mostly well in hand for the season of year.

During the first half of May there was little or no improvement in weather conditions, because of frequent rains and low temperatures, especially in the central valleys. Winter grains and grass did fairly well, except that, in considerable areas, and especially on the lower lands, the excessively wet weather caused plants to yellow. In this period, however, beneficial rains occurred in the Spring Wheat Belt, and the general coolness favored this normally cool-weather crop, except that during part of the time temperatures were too low for best results.

To the middle of May very little corn had been seeded in the Ohio Valley, and less than half the normal amount in the upper Mississippi Valley, with the season two or three weeks late in much of the interior of the country, but better progress had been made in the Great Plains States; spring wheat seeding had been nearly completed in the principal producing areas.

During the third week of the month, coolness, or wetness in many places both cool and wet, made a continuation of unfavorable weather, especially for field work, over most of the eastern half of the country. Rainfall was generally light, however, in Central-Northern States, including northwestern Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, and the northern Plains and good progress was made, though temperatures were too low for germination and growth; frosts did considerable damage in the Lake region, the northern Ohio Valley, and some Appalachian districts.

This third week of the month was especially unfavorable in a wide belt, extending from eastern Texas, central Oklahoma, and eastern Kansas northeastward over the central Mississippi and Ohio Valleys, where farm work was largely at a standstill because of wet soil and flooded bottomlands. In the northwestern Corn Belt, where rainfall was light, conditions favored field work, and much lost time in planting corn was made up, especially in Iowa and northwestern Illinois. Excellent progress was made in Iowa, and at the close of the week more than half of the Corn had been planted, with general seeding only a few days behind normal.

In general, the weather continued unfavorable for the cotton crop, because of too much rain in many persistently wet sections, and general coolness in northern districts, the heavy rains being especially unfavorable in Tennessee, most of Arkansas, central and eastern Oklahoma, and much of Texas.

Soon after the 20th of the month there was a reaction to warmer weather in the Northwestern States. It gradually became warmer in the central and eastern portions of the country, and at the same time mostly fair weather prevailed. This brought a marked improvement, as the soggy soil dried out in many places sufficiently to permit field work, and at the same time vegetation responded rapidly to the more favorable temperature conditions. The weather was unseasonably warm, germination improved, and farmers gained much lost time in planting corn, especially in the northern and western portions of the belt. In Iowa this, and the preceding rather favorable week, permitted practically all lost time to be made up, while warmer weather favored germination and growth. Planting was well along also in the more western portions of the belt. At the same time it was still behind in most of the Ohio, central Mississippi, and extreme lower Missouri Valleys, where many reports showed two or three weeks late with only a good beginning in numerous places. The weather continued mostly unfavorable for cotton. In the eastern belt temperatures were generally too low for good growth, and the latter part was too showery for field work, while in the western portion continued wet weather was unfavorable, except that rains were helpful in extreme southern Texas.

May, as a whole, was abnormally cool and wet in most of the principal interior agricultural sections, with the temperatures averaging 3° to 5° below normal and rainfall more than twice the normal amount in many places, though the upper Mississippi Valley and parts of the central Great Plains had less than the normal rainfall. Five of the last severe Mays have been cool in these areas. Efforts at corn planting this year have been very discouraging in many central valley sections, with conditions in places something like those of two years ago, but for the corn belt, as a whole, the situation is better this year than in 1927. At that time, up to June 5, when seeding, as a rule, should be practically finished,

only about one-fourth of the corn had been planted in the lower Ohio Valley, and only about one-half in much of the central and eastern portions of the Corn Belt. In addition, cool weather later that year, and especially the abnormally cold August, retarded the development of the corn crop, but at the same time a satisfactory yield was finally secured in most places, thanks to the warmth the latter part of the season, and the generally late fall.

